

Vacancy notice for a PhD researcher

RHEA Centre of Expertise Gender, Diversity and Intersectionality Vrije Universiteit Brussel

RHEA is a multi-disciplinary and interfaculty research group devoted to fundamental and applied research about gender and especially gender inequality and its interactions with other sources of inequality. RHEA affiliates around 30 researchers, including professors, post-docs, pre-docs and freelance researchers from the research teams of POLI (Political Sciences), FILO (Philosophy), JURI (Law), TALK (Language and Literature), MOSI (Mathematics, Operational research, Statistics and Information Systems, applied in human sciences), SCRI (Criminology), the Centre for Ethics and Humanism, SOCI (Sociology) and CLIC (Cultural Studies). RHEA's present core expertise is in gender equality/diversity policy and politics; women's (legal) history; and gender, migration and cultural practices.

For more information see: <http://www.vub.ac.be/en/centre-of-excellence/rhea>

PhD researcher (1 + 3 years 100%)

Job outline

You conduct a doctoral research within the scope of the Strategic Research Programme, and more precisely within one of the Programme's work packages. For a description of the theme, objectives and outline of the work packages: see below.

You also participate in national and international conferences and publish on your research topic.

Your profile

- You have a master in Social Sciences and Humanities
- Having research experience in politics or policy science research on gender, diversity, equality, intersectionality is a plus
- You are a dynamic person that is highly motivated to pursue an academic career
- You are fluent in written and spoken English; Dutch language skills are a plus

We offer

- A full time position as a pre-doctoral researcher for one year with three additional years after a positive evaluation, starting on 1 May 2016
- Financial means for methodological training
- Scientific and financial support for participating with research papers in various national and international conferences
- A three-member doctoral committee that provides feedback and advice
- Being part of a young and eager interdisciplinary research team that is well embedded in national and international networks

Procedure

By the 15h of February you send to Karen Celis (Karen.celis@vub.ac.be):

- a letter of motivation
- your CV
- a 1-page summary of your master thesis
- in case you have publications (not obligatory), a copy of what you consider to be your most important publication
- a 3-page outline of your research project including
 - o the general theme, research question, methodology
 - o a short discussion of how it fits the Strategic Research Programme and, more precisely, one of the work packages.

By the 15th of March you are informed about the outcome of the first selection based on the information and documents you provided. When positive, you are invited for an interview. The interviews take place according to the availabilities of you and the selection committee in the second half of March/beginning of April.

By the beginning of April you are informed about final outcome of the selection procedure.

For more information please contact Karen Celis (Karen.celis@vub.ac.be).

Strategic Research Programme (SRP)

Gendering Ethnicity & Ethnicizing Gender in Politics & Policy

Research theme and objectives

Gender and race/ethnicity¹ are too often conceived of as operating in isolation from each other; this means ignoring the fact that members of ethnic minorities always have a gender and, vice versa, that men and women always have an ethnic background (i.e. they are considered as 'native' or as 'other' thanks to a history of migration). In general, politics and policies depart from an assumption that the subject of policy is 'male'. If the subject of policy should happen to be female the assumption is that she is 'native'. On the other hand the assumption in policies about ethnic minorities is frequently that they are male. Often within-group inequalities are (re)produced and (re)inforced in and through politics and policies that are the net result of this 'ethnic blindness' in the case of gender and of 'gender blindness' in the case of ethnic minorities. For instance, equality policy tools such as gender quotas tend to favour native women, while reserved seats for ethnic minority often favour ethnic minority men. *Migrant and integration politics and policy* risk missing the societal reality that migrant populations are increasingly female with implications for both masculinities and femininities. The motivations, tracks and endpoints of migration and integration are gendered. Equally, *gender equality politics and policy* are in danger of misconceiving what is at stake for ethnic minority women and men and misunderstanding the key sources and dynamics of gender inequality that affect them. As European societies become more heterogeneous, the need to understand these interactions and unintended policy consequences is both societally and scientifically important. Today's newly mixed societies, both in terms of the position of women and in terms of the ethnic groups involved, offer unprecedented possibilities for better theoretical understanding of conflicts and inequalities.

This research programme is concerned with the interrelatedness and intersection of two central discrimination mechanisms, gender and ethnicity. It critically investigates the ethnic dimension of gender politics and policies, and the gender dimension of ethnic minority politics and policies. The overall

¹ Ethnicity more precisely refers to the differentiating mechanism of national origin distinguishing between 'natives' and 'others' such as ethnic minorities that have a migrant history). Ethnic minorities are people who migrated to Belgium themselves, or of whom at least one of their parents or grandparents did so. Visibility (constructed as 'race') is an important element in this, but in this short proposal we call the divider 'ethnicity'. We consider these individuals in a different light than historical ethnic groups or minorities that were residing on the territory during state-formation (e.g. the Flemish people in Belgium or the Basque people in Spain).

scientific objective is to establish how and why the interaction between gender and ethnicity affects the democratic quality, inclusiveness and effectiveness of politics and policy and its ability to reach such social goals as 'equality'. As a means to enhance theory building in the study of the interrelation between gender and ethnicity in European politics and policy, comparative analyses inquiring how differences between national settings, policy levels or sub-groups can be explained will be undertaken. More concretely, it has two main objectives each of them underpinned by several empirical research questions:

1. Furthering our empirical knowledge and theories about participation, political representation and decision-making at the intersection of gender and ethnicity.

Research questions:

- If any, what is the interaction between descriptive representation (i.e. presence in political institutions and civil society) of women and ethnic minorities: do they go hand in hand, or are there trade-offs?
- Does descriptive representation of women and/or ethnic minorities increase the substantive representation of migrant women (i.e. the representation of their interests)? Does the intersection of ethnicity and gender vary depending on migration history or ethnic identity?
- Do ethnic minority organisations and/or women's organisations lobby the state in the interest of ethnic minority women? And do they do so in a different and/or complementary manner? What is the role of organizations that combine gender and ethnicity (ethnic women's organizations)?

2. Furthering our empirical knowledge and theories about the gendered implications of ethnic minority (integration, migration) policies and the implication of gender policies for ethnic minorities, and their mutual interactions. Research questions:

- What is the impact of policies aiming at furthering the position of women and gender equality on ethnic minority women (in comparison to ethnic majority women) and ethnic minority men?
- What is the impact of policies for ethnic minorities on ethnic minority women (in comparison to ethnic minority men)?
- What are the dominant frames underpinning both type of policies, and to which extent, why and how do they include or exclude ethnic minority women's concerns and interests?
- What differences do differences between ethnic groups make in these interactions (in terms of different histories of migration and colonialism, sizes, socio-economic positions and cultures)?

Work Packages

The SRP is organized around two interrelated work packages focussing on politics and policy. The SRP aims to conduct comparative research in these two work packages. The comparisons will be cross country, cross groups, cross time and cross policy domains/levels.

- Work package 1: Gendering Ethnicity & Ethnicizing Gender in Politics

Governments all over Europe have paid considerable attention to issues relating to the political underrepresentation of historically disadvantaged groups. Claims for descriptive representation were initially directed towards the integration of women in political institutions and the introduction of gender quotas is one of the most widespread electoral reforms around the world. But democratic polities face increasing demands for diversification of their personnel, especially regarding ethnic minorities. As claims are launched by ethnic minorities, questions arise about how the demand for descriptive representation of women and ethnic minorities interact and result in representation at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. Although it may be the case that the interaction between gender and ethnicity sometimes works in the advantage of ethnic minority women, the institutionalist hypothesis seems to gain the greatest support, contending that institutions tend to maintain the power position of the dominant group (majority/native men).

This work package focuses on gender and ethnic minorities in politics and civil society and sets out to investigate the extent to which ethnic minority men and women are represented, the conditions for it and the patterns that can be discerned. It is moreover our objective to explain differences observed along national lines, policy levels and sub-groups of ethnicity and enhance theory building on participation and representation. There is also a need for methodological innovation in classifying different ethnic and gender trajectories and their intersections. A wide variety of state and civil society actors are included: elected representatives, political parties, but also ethnic minorities' and women's and men's civil society organizations (religious, cultural, economic).

- Work package 2: Gendering Ethnicity & Ethnicizing Gender in Policy

From the 1970s onwards, second-wave feminism led to the gradual development of gender-equality policies in Europe. About a decade later, several European immigration countries set up their first immigrant integration policies, realizing that immigrants were there to stay and that their better inclusion would be beneficial to all. However, it is only from the 1990s onwards that gender equality policies started to consider the specific issue of migrant woman, and that immigrant integration policies specifically began to address women.

This work package focuses on policy concerning gender and migrant minorities. It investigates both migrant/integration policies and women/gender equality policies from the perspective of migrant women and men to uncover the gendered dimension of the first and the ethnic dimension of the latter. The aim is not only to describe these, but also to explain their causes and effects thereby furthering theory building.